

Emily Coleman

Foundations of College Writing – Dr. Sherry

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Instate students vs. Out-of-State Students College Experience

Problem

Some people think deciding where to go to college may be an easy decision but there are many factors people have to consider when making this decision. One question students have to ask themselves is, “Am I going to stay close to home in familiar territory or leave the state and branch out?” Students that are going to enter their freshmen year of college have to make an immense decision. While making this decision, students have to consider factors such as tuition rates, if they are truly ready to leave home (since for most it is the first time), and where they want to live. But, how does being an instate college student versus an out-of-state student truly affect ones college experience once one arrives at college? In this paper I first will provide background information from other researchers. They researched advantages of staying instate vs. leaving the state, tuition rates between states for state schools and private schools and the migration rates for people that stay in state or choose to leave for the first time. Next, I will talk about my method of how I researched this topic and use the previous research to interpret the information I found. Then, I will produce my own findings based on interviews with college freshman at Bloomsburg University.

Background

Some studies have focused on instate students going to college versus out-of-state students. These studies have concentrated on factors that one considers when deciding where to attend college such as tuition rates, and migration facts. One study in particular was an interview where questions were asked based on the advantages of going to college instate versus going to college out-of-state. “When it comes time for students to start narrowing down their list of colleges to apply to, one issue always presents itself: whether to leave home for new-found independence and go to school out-of-state, or stay closer to home and reap the benefits of having family close by” (Unigo, 2011, p.1). (1)

This is a decision every person must make when deciding on where to attend college. It is a personal decision based off of if one is more comfortable leaving and being on his or her own or if they prefer to be close to home. Some however, are more comfortable having a safety net of knowing they can go home if needed.

“It’s all about your college state of mind,” said the interviewee (Unigo, 2011, P.1). Important components to consider while making the crucial decision of where to attend school are; being in a city, rural setting or town, the weather, and how often one wants to go home. If one leaves the state they gain more independence, can become more confident in being on their own but are facing new challenges. Whereas some advantages of staying instate are having family closer by, the tuition is cheaper and for some it is just essential that they stay instate for personal reasons (Unigo, 2011, p.1). (2) Many people are very close with their family would have trouble functioning without knowing their family is close by. This is a factor that could affect ones college experience but only if they take advantage of having family close by and go home all the time. Another consideration during the decision process is tuition rates.

The cost of college is a tremendous factor that comes into play when making your decision where to attend. Some are more fortunate than others and can have the option to not go to a state school, others are allowed to go to a state school in any state, some may have to go to a state school in the state they currently live and others may have no limitations at all. The cheapest option seems to be for students to stay instate and go to a public university (“Average undergraduate tuition and fees” 1). For Bloomsburg University, it is cheapest for instate students. For the out-of-state students that chose to come to Bloomsburg, it is cheaper for them to go here than going to a private school but seemingly more expensive than going to a state school in the state they were raised. These out-of-state students picked the school where the price was in the middle of all their options. Tuition is still reasonable; it is just not the cheapest option. Tuition can affect ones decision on where to attend but once students arrive it should not affect their college experience.

Price was not the only thing considered; migration of students from state to state was a factor looked at. The percentage of how many students left their home state each year was looked at and calculated. In 1996, about 380,000 first-time freshmen migrated

out-of-state, out of a total of 2.2 million students. This number changed based on the state. For example, in the District of Columbia, 55.2 percent of people left the state for college but only 8.7 percent of the people in Alabama left their state for college. It all depends on where one lives and the opportunities each person has available to them in the state they were raised in. “Twenty-four states had an increasing percentage of first-time students leaving the state to attend college” (“Residence and Migration”, 1996, p.1-2). In other words, about half of the United States at this time were willing to and had the amenities to try to experience something different in a new state. Meaning, these people could go to college somewhere different and have new surroundings. The individuals who choose to leave home want to step outside of their comfort zone, learn about new culture and become more independent.

These are all considerations that come into play. Not one person’s thought process will be the same. However, these are the main elements students consider when making the decision of where to attend college, and whether to stay instate or go out-of-state. All of these factors help someone to make their college decision on what school to attend, but how do they affect you once you get there? (3)

Method

Previous research relied on interviews, so I believed this would be the best way to get the information first hand. One article was interview based and showed all the reader’s opinions on the advantages of staying instate for college or going out-of-state. They directed the attention of the reader to things such as independence and making the best of the situation you are put in. Another article talked strictly about all the different tuition rates in each state and the last article talked about different migration facts. By using all the data found on what advantages there are of going to college instate versus out-of-state, tuition rates from state to state and migration facts for college freshman, I decided to further this search by asking people, “How does being an instate college student versus an out-of-state college student affect your college experience?” My goal was to use the data and resources found and study the effects of these above topics on ones college experience as a whole. I interviewed different people asking how they choose to come to Bloomsburg, what they had to consider when making the decision and

how that is affecting their college experience now. While at Bloomsburg, does being an instate student or an out-of-state student affect ones college experience, and how?

Findings

To find the answer to this question I interviewed ten different students, five out-of-state and five instate. I wanted to understand not only why and how people chose to come to Bloomsburg, but also what they experienced once they got here. There were seven questions that I asked to every person no matter where they were from (1). The first question I asked was “How often do you go home?” The majority of out-of-state students said only on breaks, and that they have not been home yet. The students that are from Pennsylvania go home a lot more often than others. It ranged from every three weeks to every five weeks. This shows that you are more likely to go home if you live in Pennsylvania. It is easier for an instate student to go home and since they live closer. They have the opportunity so most tend to take it.

The second question I asked was, “What extra curricular activities are you involved in and how many?” The answers ranged for people. It did not matter whether you were an instate student or an out-of-state student. It was just personality based, and based on if one wanted to be active. If one wanted to meet new people and find an activity they really enjoyed, then they joined activities. Some people had no interest though. The amount of activities involved in ranged from none to six. The third question I asked was, “Do your friends tend to be from Pennsylvania or out-of-state?” Three of the instate students said their friends tend to be from instate whereas two said they were from both instate and out-of-state. For the five out-of-state students the answers ranged completely from being friends with both, having the majority of friends from instate and then also having the majority of friends out-of-state. This just shows that ones friends can be from anywhere. It does not matter where someone comes from unless they let it matter. Bloomsburg University is filled with students accepting of everyone.

Everyone I interviewed choose to attend Bloomsburg University but I was curious as to why; whether answers would differ based on if you were an instate student or an out-of-state student. I asked people, “What were the deciding factors for coming to Bloomsburg?” Everyone’s answer varied however; a lot had similarities. Most people

said they loved the campus or environment, some talked about affordability while others mentioned that Bloomsburg was a good fit for them because of their major. One student in particular said, “They had to have both my majors, the extra curricular activities that I wanted, like the option to be in a sorority, a nice campus and it had to be affordable.” This answer showed all the factors this person considered when making their decision. Affordability was one of them. Bloomsburg is more affordable for instate students and this student happened to be an instate student. This led into my next question, “Is money something you have to consider while at college?” Seven of the ten people said yes money is something they have to worry about. The three individuals who said no or not really were both from out-of-state or instate so for this particular question it did not matter where you were from. Money can affect everyone whether instate or out. However, money does seem to affect the majority. This could affect ones college experience by limiting the person on the activities they can join or some aspects of their social life.

The next question I asked people was, “Do students care whether you are an instate student or an out-of-state student?” All ten students said that it does not matter where you are from. This shows Bloomsburg University has a very accepting student body. People do not care about ones background or where they came from. The last question I asked students was the main question my whole project is about. “Do you think being an instate or out-of-state student can affect your college experience?” (3) The best answer was, “If you’re instate you could be tempted to go home too much but if you’re out-of-state you could really get home sick and not have the opportunity to go home. If you go home too much you are missing out on all of the fun you could have at college but if you don’t go home at all you could end up being super home sick and not want to do anything anyway. I guess it depends on the circumstances.” Like previously stated, at college, ones experience all depends on how much effort they put into it. Whether an instate student or an out-of-state student if one becomes involved they are less likely to be homesick because they are keeping themselves busy. For some, being active and involved can be key to settling in and having a good college experience.

Conclusion

Based on the answers of the people I interviewed, I came to the conclusion that being an instate student or an out-of-state student can affect one's college experience to an extent. For example, out-of-state students are more likely to stay on campus during the weekends so they have more of an opportunity to meet new people and socialize where as since instate students go home more often they may not have as much of an opportunity. It depends on how often they go home though. Out-of-state students may end up more homesick but when asked, they said as long as they kept busy it went away after a while.

In reality, however, it is based on how much effort the individual puts into their college experience. If one tries to meet people and join activities or if money is not an issue, it might be easier to meet people because you can have more of a variety of activities you can join such as Greek life or clubs that have dues. If you are willing to try new things, be adventurous and put yourself out there, being an in state or out-of-state student should not matter.

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Lit & Soc – Writer’s Revision Sheet

Original (what you wrote)	Revision (how it changed after feedback)	Explanation/Rule (catchy way to remember next time)
“while making the crucial decision of where to attend school is”	“while making the crucial decision of where to attend school are ”	Subject is plural; use are Subject is single; use is
“does being an instate student or an out-of-state student affect ones college experience and how?”	“does being an instate student or an out-of-state student affect ones college experience, and how?”	Comma before and because you need a breath when reading the sentence so there should be a comma so you can actually take one.
“Where as some advantages”	“ Whereas some advantages”	Whereas; as is following where so as is going to always connect to where
“cheaper for them to go here then going to a private school”	“cheaper for them to go here than going to a private school”	Comparison made- use than when making a comparison between two things
“out of state”	“out-of-state”	- Hyphens – Out-of-state people may stick together so there needs to be hyphens.